

PBS MACNEIL/LEHRER NEWSHOUR
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KOREAN AIRLINER
INCIDENT

LEHRER: Shultz also said the shooting down of Korean Airlines Flight 007 a year ago put an indelible stamp on U.S.-Soviet relations. At today's State Department briefing, spokesman John Hughes also had this to say about that. JOHN HUGHES (State Department Spokesman): There can be no real compensation for the loss of life in this tragedy. Nevertheless, we're deeply troubled by the fact that the Soviet Union has never apologized for its action nor offered restitution to the families of the victims. Finally, we must do what we can to ensure that such an event never happens again. To that end, the United States calls on the Soviet Union to join the international community in observing accepted practices with regard to the safety to civil aviation. The world simply will not accept the repetition of such a senseless tragedy.

LEHRER: There is more to be said and discussed tonight about the KAL anniversary, and Judy Woodruff is in charge of that. Judy?

WOODRUFF: Jim, the Soviets made it clear today they weren't going to sit back and let the Americans reap a free propaganda bonanza from the KAL anniversary. A Soviet TV news commentator reiterated charges the plane was on a spy mission, and the Soviet news agency issued a report which suggested the U.S. may have recovered the black box flight recorder from the downed plane, but is keeping it a secret because its contents helped prove that the plane was spying. Here in Washington, a State Department spokesman called the report absolutely wrong. He said there were international authorities as well as Japanese officials on hand when the search for the black box was conducted and that there was no way the U.S. could have found it without others knowing about it. Also out of Moscow today, the Soviets for the first time acknowledged that the plane was shot down. The phrase was used in a report in the Communist Party newspaper Pravda. In the past, the Soviets have always referred to the plane having been stopped or terminated. Meanwhile, in South Korea, there was a report today that the South Korean government is still seeking compensation from the Soviets for the downed plane and its passengers. All previous demands for compensation from the Soviets have been rejected. Although it's been a year since the incident took place, it is still vivid in everyone's memory, and its impact on East-West relations is still being felt. Because there is so much mystery associated with the fate of KAL 007, we decided to take a brief look back at what happened and at the theories that have emerged since then about why it happened. On Sept. 1, 1983, Korean Airlines Flight 007 took off from Anchorage, Alaska, and headed for

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